



## RECIPE OF THE WEEK: 03/06/2020

### **HTAPODI STIFADO MEKREMITHIA (OCTOPUS STEW WITH ONIONS)**

Clean squid may be used instead of octopus, using the same method.

Octopus is cooked in a variety of ways using wine and tomatoes (htapodi krassato) or with onions and tomatoes (htapodi stifado) and with wine, tomatoes and rice (htapodi pilafi). It is just boiled, especially the small younger ones and dressed with olive oil and vinegar, more often than not accompanied by ouzo or retsina.

Although the fishermen beat the octopus when brought onto shore from the boat, the cooks beat it more on a hard surface such as rock and rub its body against it or a kitchen marble slab to tenderise it further.

Salt is never added during cooking as this may harden the fish and in any case octopus seems to retain its saltiness from the sea. An octopus dish is so delicious that it makes some people rank it in the same category as lobster.

#### Ingredients

Serves 4

1kg octopus  
100ml extra virgin olive oil  
4 cloves garlic, minced or finely chopped  
2 large tomatoes, skinned, deseeded and finely chopped or 1 x 400g canned tomatoes  
2 tbsp tomato puree, diluted in 175ml warm water  
125ml dry red wine  
4tbsp red wine vinegar  
2 bay leaves  
Needles of a sprig of rosemary, about 6cm, finely chopped  
1 cinnamon stick, about 5cm  
5-6 peppercorns  
a pinch of demerara sugar  
450ml water  
500g shallots, peeled  
To garnish flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

#### Method

1. Wash the octopus and remove the ink bag
2. Heat a large saucepan on a medium heat, place the octopus in it and cook covered for 5-10 minutes, without adding any liquid, to evaporate almost all of its juices.
3. Remove the octopus and cut the tentacles into rings and the body into strips or cubes more or less of equal size, or leave whole.
4. Heat half of the olive oil in a large casserole and sauté the octopus and garlic for around 5 minutes. Once the garlic starts to change colour add the rest of the ingredients except the shallots. Cover and simmer for about 1 hour.
5. In the meantime, in a large frying pan heat the remaining olive oil until it is hot but not smoking. Add the shallots and sauté stirring occasionally for about 10 minutes or until golden brown.
6. Pour the shallots and juices from the frying pan into the saucepan, cover and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until the octopus is tender. Check occasionally if it needs more liquid, if so add more. The sauce should be thick at the end of this process.
7. Sprinkle with parsley and serve with crusty bread, rice, pasta or fried potatoes.